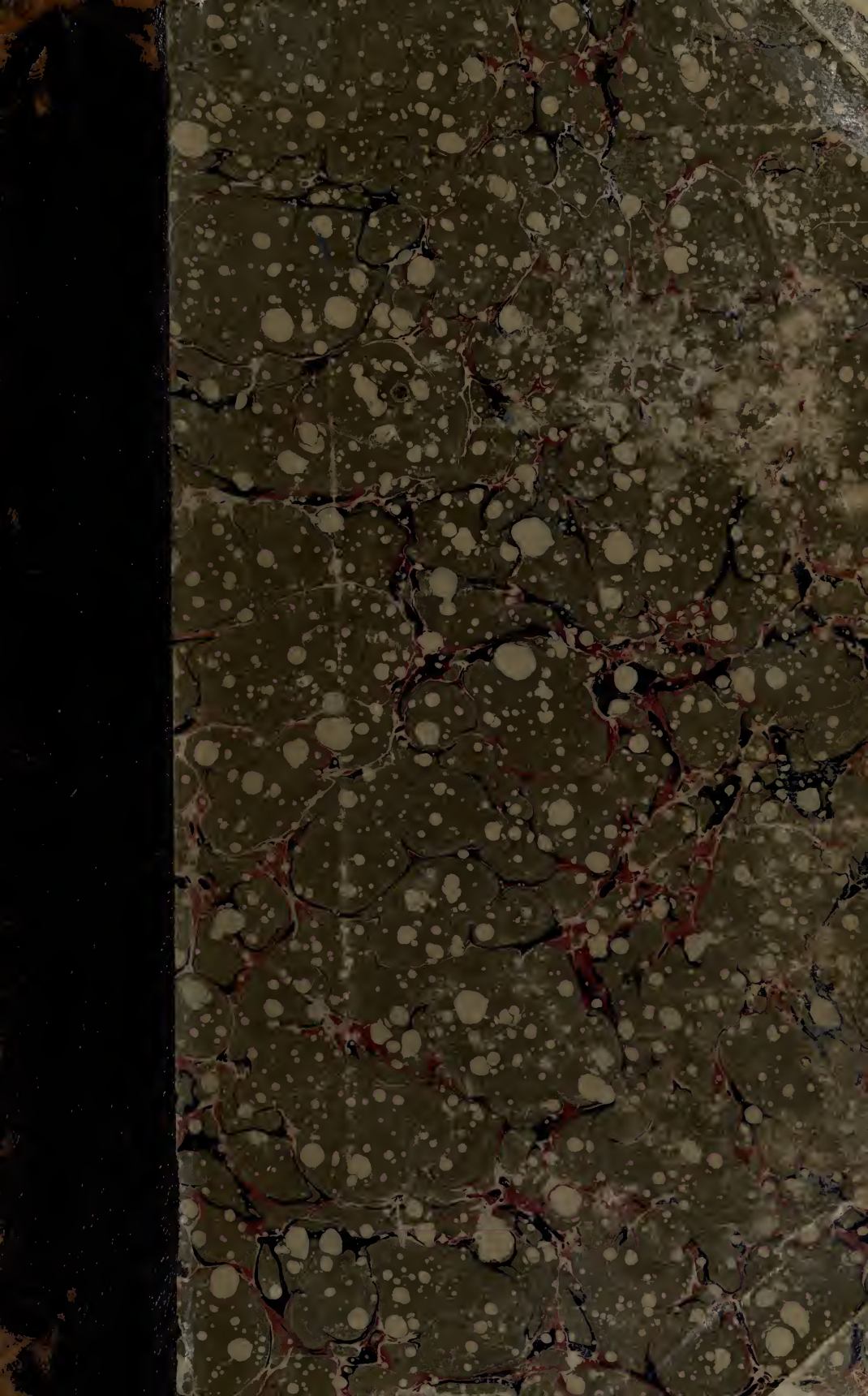




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MOUNDS IN DAKOTA, MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN.

By A. J. HILL.

Between 1860 and 1873, I personally visited all the places mentioned in this paper, and surveyed, with more or less accuracy, as circumstances permitted, the aboriginal mounds and groups of mounds now described.

§ 1. IN THE VICINITY OF SIOUX FALLS, DAKOTA.

About a dozen miles westward from the southwestern corner of Minnesota, are the well-known Falls of the Big Sioux river. The river here makes a very singular bend in the form of an irregular letter C so that any one leaving the river at that point and traveling in a direct line on any one of the eight points of the compass—except due north or south—would soon come to it again. This peculiarity of shape has caused the stream to be known to the Sioux Indians as *Ipakshan Watpa*, or River of the Bend. There are no mounds immediately at the Falls, but several groups are found not far off above and below them. All the mounds, however, that the handful of people living there in 1860 seemed to know about, were the two groups now to be described.

The first group surveyed was situated on the left bank of the river, about three miles south of west from the

Falls, somewhere on S. 19, T. 101, R. 49. It consisted of seven round mounds varying in heights from two to five feet. The view from their site of the extensive plains westward beyond the river, was a glorious one.

The other group visited lay between the Big Sioux and Imneezha rivers, about six miles a little north of east from the Falls, on Ss. 9 and 10, T. 101, R. 48, probably. The site was a narrow neck of land or plateau, which sloped gently towards the west and south, but bordered abruptly on the latter or eastern stream. The mounds surveyed, extended for about a quarter of a mile north and south, and were twenty-six in number, varying in height from two to twelve feet. To the S. SE. an eighth of a mile, were two isolated ones of but little height, and across a wide swarth to the N. NW. about the same distance, was the beginning of a series of other mounds, stretching indefinitely in a northerly direction on the eastern bank of the Big Sioux river. Unfortunately this new group had to be left untouched, for the sun was too near the horizon.

There were no trees growing either on or near these Big Sioux river mounds, except those on the immediate banks of the stream.

§ 2. AT ST. PAUL, RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA.

There were formerly two groups of mounds on the bluffs of the left bank of the Mississippi river, in the lower part of the city of St. Paul. An accurate location survey of them was made by Mr. William Wallace and myself May 7 and 8, 1862.

The lower group, which was the finest by far, was in that addition of lots known as Suburban Hills, laid out in 1856, and distant in an air line about a mile and a half due east of the present Union Depot, on Sibley street. These mounds were irregularly placed along the edge of the bluff, occupying a distance of about one seventh of a mile from the lower to the upper end of the group. The lowest down, or first numbered mound, was perched at the angle where the highest river bluff terminates, or rather trends back from the river to the northward, near the point where commences the extensive meadow land, known in old times as Grand Marais, but more recently as Pig's Eye. From such a site, one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet above the river, it can well be imagined that the view is a superb one. Fortunately these fine tumuli have a good chance of being preserved for the benefit of posterity, as it is proposed to lay out a public park on the bluff there, which will include most of the mounds, together with the adjacent hillside slopes. We found twelve undoubtedly artificial mounds in the group, the largest of which, the one at the street angle, though somewhat mutilated by a hasty excavation made a few years before, was fully fifteen feet high. The elliptical mound next to it was only four and a half feet high.

The upper group lay just one half mile W. NW. of the preceeding, across the (then) city limits, in Lyman Dayton's addition. Like the others the mounds were strung along the edge of the river bluff, which is there lower, being about one hundred and fifty feet in height.

What, with the unavoidable extension of the quarrying of the limestone on which they stood, the grading of the streets, the erection of dwelling houses, and the establishing of gardens, but one mound of this group remains in existence. They were, however, on the whole, much smaller than those of the lower group, as the highest did not exceed six feet. In examining the map one would naturally suppose that there were mounds between Short and Cherry streets, but, if so, they must have been very insignificant, as Mr. Dayton, the owner of the addition, when asked about the matter, on the ground itself, said that he did not know of any having formerly existed along the edge of the bluff where cut away.

The *Wakan-teebe*, or cave described by Captain Carver, 1766-7, lies between the site of the upper group and the river bank. Whether he meant these mounds by certain expressions of his, or not, is an unsettled question. He says, on his first visit: "A little distance from this dreary cavern is the burying place of several bands of the Naudowessie Indians * * * they always bring the bones of the dead to this place;" and on his second visit: "When we arrived at the great cave, and the Indians had deposited the remains of their deceased friends in the burial place that stands adjacent to it——"

It was the intention of Mr. Wallace and myself to complete the survey of these two groups by making measurements for the outline and height of each mound, but the civil war interfered with the execution of that design, as it did with many more important projects of other people.

§ 3. OTHER MOUNDS IN RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA.

At the lower end of the Pig's Eye marsh already mentioned, there stood (April, 1868) an isolated mound, not situated on the bluffs, but below them, near their foot, at the highest part of the river bottom on the sloping ground half-way between the military road and the road-bed of the St. P. & C. R. R., then in course of construction, and distant about three hundred and fifty feet southward from the culvert on the former. It was in a cultivated field, and had itself been plowed over for years; yet it had still a mean height of six and a half feet; its diameter was sixty-five feet. The top of it was only thirty-one feet above the highwater of the Mississippi, according to the levels taken by the railroad engineers. The location of the mound, according to U. S. surveys, was on the N. $\frac{1}{2}$ of SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 23, T. 28, R. 22, and about one mile north of Red Rock landing. Mr. J. Ford, one of the old settlers of the neighborhood, said that a man named Odell had, some years previously, dug into it far enough to satisfy his curiosity, as the discovery of human bones clearly proved it to have been built for sepulchral purposes.

Near the southwestern corner of White Bear Lake, on the SE. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 14, T. 30, R. 22, was, and fortunately still is, a fine tumulus, which has been gazed upon by many thousands of people, for it is near the most frequented part of that popular lake, and the county road ran by it, even graded a little way into its base. Indeed, the mound narrowly escaped being graded away altogether in order to allow a sufficient width for the road between

the Murray property (afterwards Markoe), and the edge of the bluff back of the lake on which the former stood. The height was twelve feet and diameter about forty-five feet, and on the side nearest the water it stood close to, or rather merged into the natural bank and sloped with it to the edge of the lake. Other, but much lower, mounds were afterwards found in the dense brush back from the lake not far off, but they were not thought of at the time the L. S. & M. R. R. was being built, a few rods to the west of them.

§ 4. MOUNDS AROUND LAKE MINNETONKA, MINNESOTA.

At the eastern or lower end of Lake Minnetonka, back of the hotel and railroad station at Wayzata, was, and still is, on the low bluff there, a rather conspicuous round mound. It was situated on the public square, though its southern side encroached on the street. The mean diameter was found to be sixty feet, and the height five feet. It had been higher originally, but excavation had taken away the top part and defaced it. Measured June 22, 1869.

Westward from the same village was a similar mound, known as Harrington's, situated on SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 1. T. 117,. R 23. Its diameter was sixty-two feet and height eight feet. It was built on top of a high bluff, and, like the one at Wayzata, had the lower lake and its promontories and islands in full view. Measured June 22, 1869.

The peninsula formerly known as Starvation Point, now called Orono, was evidently a favorite place of the mound builders, and the mounds there were well known to the modern settlers. On September 25, 1867, the State His-

torical Society held a field meeting on the ground for the purpose of opening one or more of these mounds. Taking advantage of the opportunity I surveyed all of the group which were in open ground, eight in number. The largest of them was sixty-five feet in diameter and six feet high, and was the one most dug into. There were undoubtedly other mounds concealed in the thickets, together with some sort of an embankment.

In the Upper Lake Minnetonka, is what was known as Nobles' or Mound Island (now Phelps'), stretching from NE to SW, about two miles. On its eastern shore, near the south end, was a group of ten mounds, of which I made the best survey I could under the circumstances, on October 6, 1872. The mounds were situated on ground about — feet above the water, and were quite small, being only fourteen to twenty-five feet in diameter, and two to three feet high.

On the same shore of this island, a quarter of a mile or more to the west of the preceding, were two circular mounds lying thirty-six feet apart. The eastern one was twenty feet in diameter by three-and-a-half feet in height, and the other thirty feet by five. This latter I opened the same day, assisted by John Eastlake.

About half a mile to the southwest of Cook's hotel was a spot by the lake then known as the picnic grounds, near where now is the Bartlett Place, where was a well-known group of mounds. I could not get all of them by reason of the dense and tangled thickets at the southwestern end of the site, but managed to survey twelve after a fashion, the two largest of which (Nos. 7 and 12), were,

respectively, forty-eight and fifty-two feet in diameter, and five feet high, the others diminishing in height to two feet.

Besides the above visited and surveyed, numerous mounds were reported as existing at other points on the lake.

§ 5. MOUNDS AT LAKE CALHOUN, MINNESOTA.

A large number of mounds, or "little hillocks ranged in rows," had been mentioned in a newspaper letter as existing on an elevated spot on the southeastern shore of Lake Calhoun, Hennepin county, Minnesota, but careful inspection of the site soon after (September 1867), did not enable me to find more than *three*, which lay in a row close to each other. They were circular in outline, between two and three feet high, and thirty to forty in diameter, as estimated, not measured. Their surface was seamed and irregular, but whether from the effects of digging subsequent to their erection, agricultural operation, or other artificial cause, I could not determine. They were all grassed over, and certainly had been that way for several years. The site was the high steep bluff bank of the lake, about where the Lyndale "Pavilion" stood in subsequent years, I should judge.

§ 6. MOUNDS AT CENTERVILLE, ANOKA COUNTY, MINN.

On July, 1869, I made a rough survey of some mounds that had been described as somewhere near the shore of Centerville lake, eighteen miles from St. Paul. There were seven in the group, and they varied in height from three to five feet, except the last one, which was twelve feet high. This high and steep mound was then in use as a chicken house, a square excavation having been made right

into it for that purpose. The sides of the cut furnished good sectional views of human bones imbedded in the earth, disconnected and without order, as if they had been piled together after some promiscuous or piece-meal burial custom of old times.

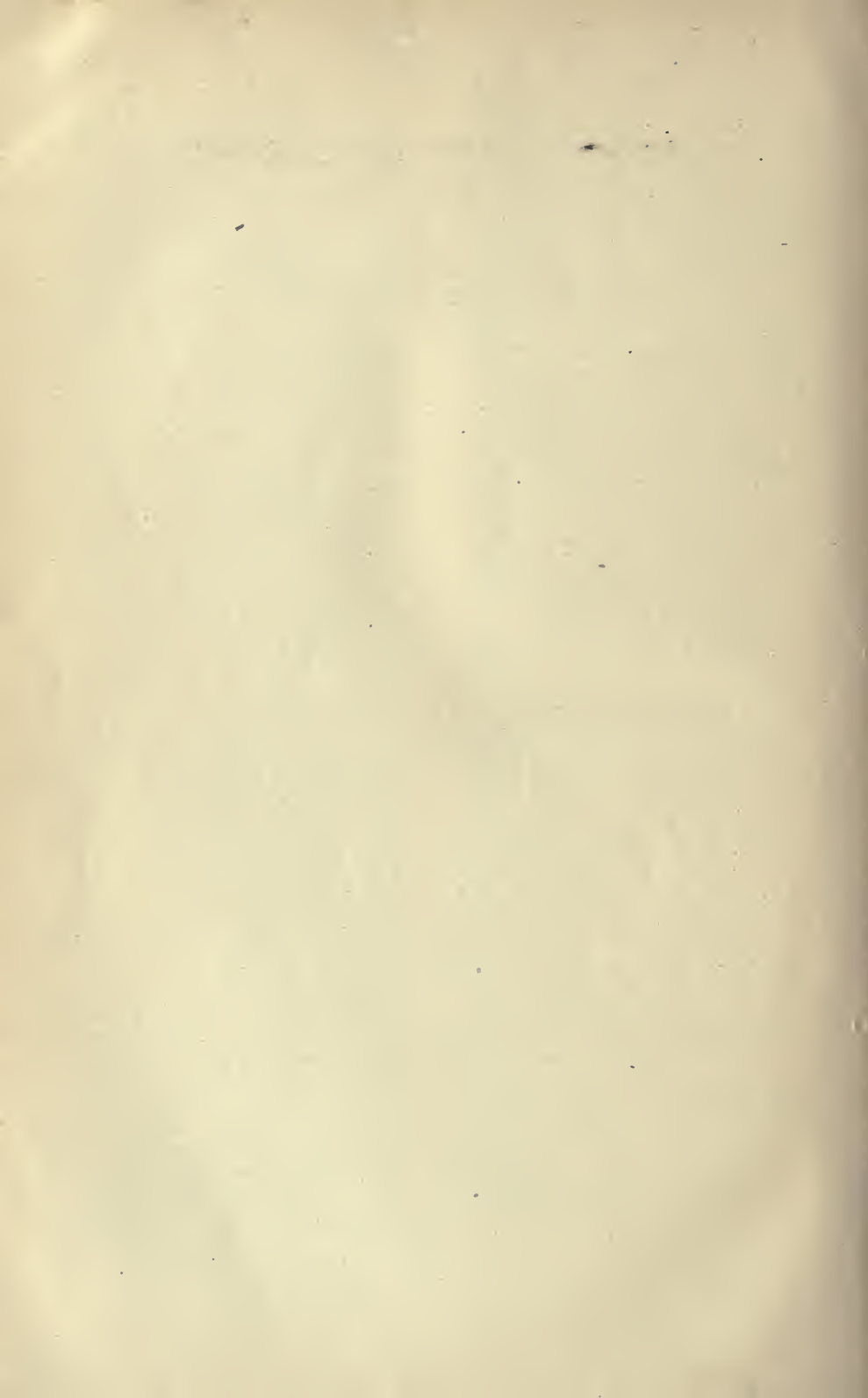
§ 7. MOUNDS AT PRESCOTT, WISCONSIN.

At the angle formed by the confluence of the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers, on the eastern bank of the former, is the town of Prescott, Wisconsin. On May 13, 1873, three hours' time was employed in making such reconnoissance survey as was feasible of the mounds which stretch along the bluff of the Mississippi there. The smallest of them was about twenty-five feet diameter and one foot high, and the largest fifty-six feet diameter and four feet high, as nearly as could be then ascertained.

§ 8. MOUNDS AT PINE CITY, MINNESOTA.

In August, 1873, a large mound was graded away at Pine City, on Snake river, which I located and measured carefully at the time; it was nearly half gone, having been cut through perpendicularly. It stood on the south side of Third avenue, just to the west of the middle of the block, between Ninth and Tenth streets. Its diameter was seventy feet, and height exactly eight feet. Bones (on the west side), had been taken out of it, relics of human skeletons, but there were no more visible in the face of the cut at the time of my measurement. There were other mounds on the townsite, not far off, but no one ever surveyed them, and they are probably all gone by this time.

St. Paul, Minn., May 12, 1888.



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